

Ag. Disaster Declared Drought, Insects To Blame

With Utah gaining the unenviable reputation of being the driest of the dry states, Governor Mike Leavitt, declared Utah an Agricultural Disaster Area May 20, 2003, and promptly requested federal disaster assistance. Citing information supplied by Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson, Governor Leavitt pointed to extreme drought and insect infestation as the primary factors for the request.

Commissioner Peterson and Governor Leavitt participated in a news conference (below) announcing the disaster declaration while kicking off this year's "Slow the Flow" water conservation campaign.

"The vast majority of our farmers and ranchers are suffering a minimum crop loss of at least 30 percent due to drought, insect infestation and high winds," said Commissioner Peterson.

Utah is entering the current crop year with minimal or nonexistent snow melt in most areas of the state. The well-documented drought conditions have been ongoing for five years. Utah is also one of nine states that has qualified for special livestock feed assistance in the form of the Nonfat Dry Milk Program by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Many grazing areas have little or no vegetation. What forage is present is often consumed by Mormon cricket and grasshoppers.



Regulatory Services' Inspector Discovers Illegally Imported Chicken

Heads up work by Regulatory Services Compliance Specialist, Chad Reeder, led to a nine-state recall of 21,000 lbs. of chicken product that was illegally imported into the United States from India.

Reeder was conducting a routine inspection of Qadar Sweetz-N-Spicez grocery store in West Valley City when he discovered several boxes of a food product imported from India. India is one of several countries not certified to export meat and poultry products to the United States as part of efforts to prevent the spread of foreign animal diseases into the U.S.

Reeder's discovery prompted the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to issue a class I recall of the 21,000 lbs. of the product that was imported by Dhaka Import and Export Company of Los Angeles. Dhaka voluntarily recalled its product from the following states: Utah, Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

The USDA-FSIS has received no reports of illness associated with consumption of this product. Consumers who have the product should return it to the point of purchase. The products subject to recall are approximately 1.2 lb. Boxes of "favour-ita, THE FAMILY FAVORITE Chicken Biryani" and the 9.6 oz. Box of HALAL "CraveRolls."

Consumer with questions about food safety may call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

Product Recall

The USDA-FSIS is recalling these two products from stores in Utah, Arizona, California, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Washington because of importation violations.



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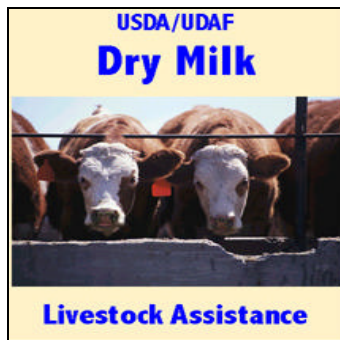
Utah Governor
Utah Commissioner of
Agriculture and Food
AG. News Editor

Michael O. Leavitt
Cary G. Peterson

Larry Lewis

UDAF BEGINS DISTRIBUTION OF POWDERED MILK TO UTAH LIVESTOCK OWNERS

Salt Lake City – Utah cattle ranchers are learning exactly how much non-fat dry milk they will be receiving as part of a nine-state drought assistance program. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) has mailed out nearly 1500 vouchers to ranchers who qualify for a portion of the 16-million pounds of dry milk that has been allocated to Utah by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Shipments are already being ordered.



"We have been working for the past several weeks on a fair and economical system that makes the powdered milk available to all qualified livestock ranchers in Utah," said Cary G. Peterson, Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food. "We now know how much product we are entitled to, and how much each individual rancher can receive," added the commissioner.

Voucher Response Deadline is June 20, 2003

The UDAF has mailed out vouchers and instruction sheets to ranchers asking them whether they wish to directly receive the non-fat dry milk (NDM) or trade it to a feed manufacturer in exchange for other feed products containing a percentage of the NDM.

Ranchers have until June 20, 2003 to alert the UDAF whether they wish to keep the NDM or trade it to a manufacturer or other party.

The USDA has established a mid-July deadline for the state to order the 16-million pounds of NDM, and to indicate where and when it should be delivered.

"We face a considerable logistics challenge in trying to have the powdered milk delivered as close as possible to our ranchers," said Kyle Stephens, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture and Food.

"We are asking that participating ranchers not delay in returning the information requested on the vouchers to our office," Stephens added.

Utah is one of nine states suffering through the worst drought conditions in the country. Currently all 29 counties in Utah are designated as being in extreme drought conditions.

Utah Governor Mike Leavitt recently signed a state-wide agricultural disaster declaration in May, and is requesting that the U.S. Department of Agriculture declare Utah a federal drought disaster area. The designation would make aid available to Utah farmers and ranchers affected by the drought.

In April, the USDA announced it was releasing more than 200 million tons of powdered milk to ranchers that had been in long-term storage. The product is a source of high-quality protein that would aid in the nutritional needs of foundation livestock herds.

Commercial livestock feed manufacturers are also receiving information in the mail about how they may participate in the program.

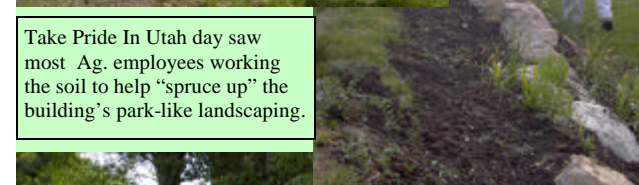
Visit www.ag.utah.gov for more information about the program, and to view a sample voucher and instruction sheet.

Junior Livestock Program

On behalf of the Salt Lake County Junior Livestock Program you are invited to participate in the Junior Livestock Buyers Breakfast (7:30 am) and the Junior Livestock Auction (10:00 am) on Saturday, August 16th 2003, Salt Lake County Fairgrounds, 10800 South 2200 West, South Jordan.

4-H and FFA youth work hard throughout the year while learning valuable life skills as they feed, care for, and prepare their animals for the fair. The auction during the fair provides an opportunity for the exhibitors to sell their premium market animals. Photographs and advertising will help promote buyers who purchase the grand champion, reserve champion, and third place animals in each of the three species of beef, sheep, and swine.

Please plan on attending the Junior Livestock events during the Salt Lake County fair and support our 4-H & FFA youth.



Take Pride In Utah day saw most Ag. employees working the soil to help "spruce up" the building's park-like landscaping.